

WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

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BUILDING IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

The US strategy concerned with security and training of Iraqi forces is, at least at the strategic level, fundamentally sound: to train Iraqi security forces (ISF) and have them takeover responsibility for directly dealing with the insurgency so that U.S. forces can gradually withdraw. The following written testimony will outline and assess US and coalition efforts to train and build Iraqi security forces capable of effectively taking over security responsibilities in Iraq and will focus on:

- The New Iraq Armed Forces (IAF) which includes both the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi National Guard (ING).
- Iraqi Interior forces including the Iraqi Police services (IPS), Border security and specially trained high-end internal security units.
- The recruitment, vetting and training of these forces and the need for an emphasis on quality over quantity and;
- the relationship of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) with the emerging ISF.

THE NEW IRAQI ARMED FORCES

The defining mission of the IAF, particularly the Iraqi Army is the external defense of Iraq. It is unlikely however that Iraq will face a conventional military threat in the foreseeable future. Both Iran and to a lesser extent Syria pose threats to Iraqi security but these are by no means or likely to be in the conventional sense. Both Syria and Iran have used different modes of asymmetric interference in Iraq's internal affairs to weaken and destabilize Iraq in this transitional period. The pervasive use of Syrian and Iranian intelligence operatives in Iraq, either actively facilitating or turning a blind eye to Baathist financing arrangements for insurgent networks within Syria, lack of cooperation on border security (not tightening borders), allowing foreign jihadists to enter into Iraq across their territory and elements of the Syrian regime facilitating funding of insurgents either unofficially or through clandestine official channels.

Despite the variety of these unconventional threats Iraq still requires a capable modern army to defend against the possibility of conventional external aggression. Clearly external aggression is manifested in many internal and non-conventional ways which

poses a conundrum for the rebuilding of forces in so far as deciding on force structure and also has the effect of overemphasizing the domestic use of either Army special forces or the internal security forces.

The new IAF are a force built from scratch, it currently includes ground, air and coastal defense elements and it will grow to around 27 battalions or three divisions by mid 2005. These Iraqi Army battalions consist of Ground Forces (motorized infantry and a recently operational mechanized brigade), Air Force (limited to transport and lift capacity), Coastal Defense Force or Navy (limited to 5 coastal patrol boats, and a river boat capacity on the Shatt al Arab and a small contingent of Marines).

In addition the ING (approximately 40 light infantry battalions), is a light paramilitary force formerly known as the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) which also forms part of the IAF. The ING was initially recruited and trained in a much quicker cycle than the new Army to be an auxiliary force tasked with conducting joint patrols with US and coalition forces. The ING battalions were brought under the Iraqi MoD in April 2004 and are now considered part of the IAF although its capabilities and skill sets are of a lesser standard than the regular Iraqi Army.

The long term aim for the IAF is for a modestly sized but capable and well-trained force although the final numbers for the force are a matter for the sovereign government of Iraq to determine. It certainly will not be as bloated as the former military complex was and it will be interoperable with allies and friends.

The Special forces units of the Iraqi Army are known as the Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF) it is currently 9 battalions (approximately 800 men to a battalion) strong and it has been extremely effective in military operations in Fallujah and Sammara alongside US Marines in late 2004. These special forces also include the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force (ICTF) (3 battalions) a small but highly capable CT/SOF capability which has grown out of the 36th ING/ICDC battalion which was put together by taking forces from each of the political militia groups¹

It is envisioned that Iraq's external security will be provided by a combination of the developing and growing capabilities of the IAF, emerging regional security ties with gulf states and other friendly Arab states, alliances with members of the coalition and an involvement in global and regional multilateral organizations and groups. At some point in the (distant) future, international deployment for multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian operations may be possible and domestic use of the IAF should be a last resort and under tight control.

While UNSCR 1546 broadly outlines Iraqi security relationships, the specifics of the partnership come down to how the IAF fit into the command and control of the MNF-I, and to the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG's) involvement in military decision-making. In theory and in the future stabilized state of Iraq, even if not in ITG practice

¹ Political parties and militias that contributed troops include the Badr corps the armed wing of SCIRI, Pesh Merga from the KDP and the PUK. Iraqi National Accord and Iraqi National congress.

during 2005, command authority for the IAF issues from the PM, to the Defense Minister, to the Chief of Defense Staff, to the operating commander. At the moment, the IAF's relationship to the MNF-I makes the picture slightly different. Since the transition to sovereignty, IAF personnel have been assigned to coalition forces as Iraq's contribution to the MNF-I, making Iraq a fully fledged member of the coalition.

The manning, training, equipping of the IAF is provided by the Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) and continues so long as the newly elected Iraqi government continues to seek US and coalition assistance in securing Iraq and developing the capacity of all ISF. So long as this is the case the following 24 months are critical for US policy makers to ensure that in the ongoing capacity and capability building of the new Iraqi Army specific principles and practices (many of which have been established to date) are entrenched and maintained.

Structural Reforms: Spreading the Load

A perfect example of a major structural shift is the arrangement whereby the logistics, combat support services including health and transportation and interior lines of communications and mobility of the IAF have been designed to be heavily reliant on civil infrastructure and support services. These arrangements put in place over the past two years essentially mean that the Ministries of Health, Transport and Communications are primarily responsible for providing services in their relevant areas of expertise to the Iraqi military.

These outsourcing measures effectively place limits to IAF logistics and the Iraqi military's overall ability for external force projection. The measures have the positive effect of allowing the Iraqi Army to focus on its core objective, which is to be a modern capable defense force tasked with using its military and **warfighting** capabilities to defend Iraq and her people. The measures prevent the Iraqi military from developing into the bloated patchwork of military industrial complexes, engineering, logistics and support services that characterized and supported the inefficient, repressive and in the realm of territorial defense and warfighting, the woefully ineffective military that existed under the Baath regime.

The IAF's future potential as a threat to its neighbors or the possibility that it may be used to attack its own people under these arrangements is exceedingly difficult. By making imperative a broad range of support from civilian ministries, the Baathist regime's predilection to using force as the primary tool of state action to achieve its goals either externally or internally is rendered obsolete. It will be very difficult to maintain such abusive military actions without support from a range of civilian ministries and a broad consensus for the use of force at the executive cabinet level by those Ministers whose ministries are responsible for providing support services for the military. This does not effect the IAF's ability for self defense in the case of external threats in the future. It does however limit its ability to sustain force projection externally or in the event that it is being used primarily to attack a particular internal population.

US policy makers must continue to encourage the even spread of assets, resources and support services amongst the civil infrastructure in support of the Iraqi military. It is imperative that moves to empower the military to regain control of these support services and become entirely self sufficient (and therefore accountable only to its own ends or those of a political elite) be resisted. This prevents the Iraqi military from once again becoming a powerful political force or tool of one Iraqi political or ethno-religious group. The IAF now requires the support of a broad consensus from a pluralistic and representative executive to function effectively. The more the Iraqi military is reliant upon a broad range of Iraqi civil ministries for support and infrastructure the more its politicization and or use by one particular political or ethno-religious group against another or for ill advised invasions of her neighbors is made an impossibility. Moreover the more these arrangements are entrenched the more capable the IAF will be to achieving its core task of providing an effective defense of the territorial integrity of the democratic state of Iraq.

Micro Reforms: a Change of Army Culture

The cultural changes in the new Army can also be seen in a broad range of reforms which have not only led to greater professionalism but also a fundamental change of culture. The new Iraqi Army is made up of ethnically mixed units both at the officer level and the enlisted. Unlike the old Army in which the officer class was predominantly Sunni and the enlisted/conscripts were largely Shia. The new Army recruits for both officer and enlisted are drawn from all sectors of Iraq's ethnic and religious backgrounds. The ethnicities represented include Sunni, Shia, Kurd, Christian, Yazidi, Assyrian and recruiting into the Army battalions reflect a remarkably accurate representation/split based on the demographic.

The plurality of the Iraqi Army enhances its standing as a national institution and this is important because it can act as a force for national unity. A common refrain from former Iraqi Army officers was the strength of the old military as a national institution and its unifying effect on the Iraqi state, they often pointed to the fact that the Iraqi military has always had kurds, sunni, shia and Christians in its ranks. However what was often left out of these historical instructions was the fact that the Sunnis dominated not only the officer class but also the divisions and units that were better equipped and paid.

Iraqi Leadership development is a key area that Major General Eaton and currently Lt. General Petraus have focused coalition assistance efforts. Officer training has largely been conducted in country and in neighboring Jordan, but there have also been important Iraqi officer exchange programs to military colleges in the US Italy, the UK, and Australia. To further enhance leadership a capable and effective Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) development has been made a priority. One of the strengths of the US military and other western militaries is leadership and the backbone of this leadership is the NCO corp. It is an understatement to point out that the Iraq much like many Arab Armies has not had a fine tradition of NCO class. In fact it has been largely neglected, compounding the terrible leadership performances of the Officer class and being one of the main reasons for leadership incompetence at the tactical level because of a lack of

innovation, initiative, motivation and independent and critical thought under pressure. These are all areas which are enhanced in western military units by the leadership of NCO's.

New practices such as recruitment of an all volunteer force, merit-based assignment and promotion and competitive pay enhance the overall professionalism and competence of the IAF. In addition the military justice system has been designed to rely heavily on the civilian justice system for serious offenses, with civilian judges acting as courts-martial. This is a measure in accord with the principle of spreading the load of military support to the civil infrastructure and as many civilian ministries as possible. In short the Iraq military can no longer be a law unto itself.

Many of these micro reforms enhance the Iraqi army's ability to be a strong and capable defense force but also to be a supporting institution to the new Iraqi democracy.

Military Aid to the Civil Authority: The Need for a Legal Framework

One of the critical aspects of the Iraqi Army being a supporting institution to Iraqi democracy was also one of the crucial tasks facing the former Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and its Iraqi counterparts. To develop a policy to authorize and control the domestic use of the IAF. In Iraq, the domestic use of the IAF is an extremely sensitive issue. Iraqis, particularly the Kurds and the Shia, suffered decades of repression at the hands of the old regime, and many in the initial period of the CPA mandate argued there should be no new IAF at all. It seemed that the demons of the past might be stirred by the mere sight of an Iraqi in khaki. Many members of the now-defunct Iraqi Governing Council wanted to completely delimit the internal use of the IAF, calling for strict bans on such deployment.

However, the need for a capable, well-trained and professional army to defend Iraq against external aggression and to support interior forces during emergencies and disasters prevailed. Consequently, the Transitional Administrative Law (in force until the drafting of a new Iraqi constitution in August 2005) allows domestic use of the IAF, and endorses the assignment of the IAF to the MNF-I under UNSCR 1511/1546, but calls for the future constitution to ensure that Iraq's military is never again used to oppress the Iraqi people.

There is therefore an urgent need for a more specific legislative framework to guide the domestic use of the IAF in the future (where UNSCR 1511/1546 no longer apply). This 'Military Aid to the Civil Authority' must be legislated by the new Iraqi Government. The legal framework established by a 'Military Aid to the Civil Authority' legislation can delineate when and how the IAF can be called and used for by the civil authority in internal security and internal defense roles and legal guidance for its relationship with other security services. The legislation is consistent with the principle of primacy of the civil power. The objective of this legislation would be to provide a legal framework for the employment of members of the IAF in support of the civilian authorities when the resources of the normal civilian authorities (police, emergency services) are unable to cope. The concern that the Iraqi armed forces not be used to repress the population while

valid and based on a woeful track record of past abuses must be balanced with the fact that most armed forces around the world often augment civil authorities, particularly when police resources are unable to cope. This can be seen in some internal security roles such as the Olympic games, summit meetings, a host of large social, cultural and political events, and some counter terrorism, these operations have a legal foundation based on Military Aid to Civil Authority doctrine which addresses situations where force is contemplated. Other military internal operations which do not consist of the Use of Force are also conducted under a legislative framework based on the more benign Military Aid to the Civil Community doctrine for activities such as disaster relief.

Democracies around the world are characterized by having a solid legislative underpinning regulating Military Aid to the Civil Authority roles and ensuring accountability to the parliament and the people. There was no such body of law and regulation in Iraq in the past, leaving the use of the military in these roles unconstrained. Moreover because at present the IAF operates under the MNF-I – there is still no such body of law although the use of the IAF is constrained by the better judgment of MNF-I commanders taking into account IAF capabilities and the political sensitivity of their use in internal operations. However the intensive and likely continued use of the IAF in internal security operations (even well after the US and the coalition have handed over security responsibility) make the legislation particularly important element of a genuine democratic state in Iraq.

Much work was completed on a draft military aid to the civil authority legislation by CPA and Iraqi lawyers as a basis for future Iraqi government legislation., however it was not put into place as a CPA Order because the MNF-I/CENTCOM and the Pentagon feared that it would too seriously constrain the operational freedom of the IAF in the emergency period in being used against the insurgency. As the IAF grows however and there is likely to be a shift in the security arrangements after the ratification of the new constitution and elections in December 2005, it becomes ever more imperative that the Iraqi government is strongly encouraged to legislate these frameworks so that they are ready to be implemented as the US and coalition fully handover security responsibilities over the next 24 months. There will also be some need in the future for similar legal frameworks for all of the Iraqi security forces.

POLICE AND INTERNAL SECURITY SERVICES

The Iraqi Internal security forces are made up of police, border security, and facilities protection forces which all report to Ministry of Interior. The IPS is a national force with regional and local arms. Its missions are law enforcement, public safety, and community service its mission is basic Law and Order and local policing.

There has been an enormous amount of criticism of the Iraqi police pointing to their inability to face insurgents. Much of this criticism is unfair as even the best trained Western Police forces facing RPG, small arms fire and suicide bomb attacks on their stations and officers would collapse under such pressure.

The MNF–I is mandated to operate in support of these besieged Iraqi Ministry of Interior forces, including the police, which retain primary responsibility for Iraqi internal security.² During the interim period Police and other internal security personnel did begin coordinating successfully with coalition and Iraqi military forces through a network of local, regional and national structures. For example, the MNF–I has been coordinating with Interior and police services at the provincial level through Joint Coordination Centers, which have provided a command and control capability until Iraqi Police Service command and control centers are gradually established. The MNF–I has continued to transfer responsibility for security to appropriate Iraqi civil authorities as they have developed their capacity and as security conditions permit.

Police capabilities and its members are being trained to handle severe internal challenges and are tiered to enable flexible threat responses: public order, SWAT, Civil Intervention Force, Emergency Response Unit. These higher-end, specialized Police forces are nationally based and are being built with the required counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT) capability. These forces are in varying stages of development, but they have in the interim period had successes in the front line against the terrorist and insurgent threats to security in Iraq, and were entirely controlled and commanded by the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG). The bulk of these high-end internal security forces are commonly known as the Iraqi Civil Intervention Force (ICIF) an umbrella grouping that includes several types of the specialized police forces:

- The Iraqi Police Service Emergency Response Unit: an elite 270-man team trained to respond to national-level law enforcement emergencies—essentially a SWAT capability.
- The 8th Mechanized Police Brigade (MPB): a paramilitary, counterinsurgency Iraqi police unit. The MPB will comprise three battalions.
- The Special Police Commando Battalions provide the Ministry of Interior with its strike-force capability. The commandos—which will ultimately comprise six full battalions—are highly vetted Iraqi officers and rank-and-file servicemen largely made up of Special Forces professionals with prior service.³

The coalition has a goal of 33 battalions of these troops, (including Army special forces) some 25,000 men, To achieve this goal effectively over the next 18 months the US and Coalition must seriously push additional deployments of training brigades, an American training brigade (ideally including members of one of the Army's elite ranger training battalions) as well as several hundred more police trainers from local departments and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, NATO and European police trainers.

One caveat to the development of these high end internal security forces is the problem that they may become (in two years time) too powerful. This is a Catch 22 and a danger for US policy makers. Although high end internal security forces have been identified as the key to defeating the insurgency their development risks making the forces and the MoI too powerful, a possible threat to the democratic government particularly if they are

² UNSCR 1546

³ http://www.mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil/facts_troops.htm

controlled by exclusively by the PM or the Minister of Interior who may be tempted to utilize these forces in suppressing political opposition or turn them against a particular ethno-religious group. This was part of the reason (incompetence and corruption the other factors) in the high turnover of Interim Interior ministers over the past two years – in an effort to ensure that there was a balance of power in the interim cabinet and that the Minister of Interior was not aligned too closely with other centers of power such as the Prime Minister or the Defense Minister.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES REFORM: QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

It is the quality, not the quantity, of the Iraqi security forces which is critical to a realistic transfer of security responsibility from U.S. forces to the Iraqi security forces over the next 24 months. The CPA and the US military moved extremely quickly to begin basic training of the different Iraqi forces. At present however because of an initial emphasis on the quantity of forces, (getting Iraqi boots on the ground) the vast majority of ISF (approximately 140,000 said to be trained and in uniform)⁴ do not have the required training and do not have the required capabilities to conduct offensive (or even defensive⁵) operations against the insurgents. This does not imply that there should not be the large numbers of Iraqi forces which exist. It is just that they each have a role and function, as in any society, and not all of them can or should be thrown on the front line of the insurgency. As the insurgency intensified through the summer of 2003, the CPA and the military developed policies to train the high-end internal forces, (special forces, police command units) with the specific role of effectively countering the insurgency and relieving combat pressure from US forces.

To date U.S. and coalition forces have led the counterinsurgency effort with Iraqi forces largely in support. Despite command of the world's most technologically advanced military machine, the United States is having remarkable difficulty defeating or even containing the insurgency. This is because traditional military forces even one as powerful as the US military are not geared toward the mainly urban operations needed to defeat small cells of insurgents. Iraq needs security forces that are trained specifically in CT and COIN operations. Unfortunately the scale and deadliness of the insurgency, has necessitated the fledgling Iraqi Army, ING and less than capable IPS being thrown into the frontline against the insurgents.

The key to a realistic transfer of security responsibility to Iraqi forces rests not only with the Iraqi Army special forces (such as the IIF), but more importantly with the building of the high-end internal security forces under the Ministry of Interior. A relatively small number of specially trained Iraqi internal security forces have conducted effective and independent (from the coalition) COIN operations with highly effective Iraqi-Coalition intelligence coordination and some American logistical support. These forces are separate from the standard military and include mobile counterterrorism units, light-infantry police battalions and SWAT teams,. They performed well alongside coalition

⁴ See http://www.mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil/facts_troops.htm

⁵ Mosul Police desertion November/December 2004 was a case in point.

troops in Falluja and Samarra, and pulled off a hostage rescue in Kirkuk in which the Americans provided only logistical support.

More importantly the US and Iraqi military are capable of retaking cities like Samarra, Fallujah, Ramadi and other troublesome towns in the sunni triangle but in the long term it is these high end Iraqi internal security forces specifically trained for urban centric operations which will be able to hold and eventually stabilize them.

Eventually a force of 25,000 or so of these highly trained Iraqi internal security troops, operating at the point of the spear, with the remaining bulk of Iraqi forces in a supporting role, have a reasonable chance of defeating the insurgency. This is largely due to the fact that successful and effective COIN operations are not just about raw numbers; it is the quality of the Iraqi security forces and their capability to do the job and not their quantity, which will ultimately make the difference.

These specialized Iraqi national police units are particularly important because of their specialized training and skill sets and their ability to combine intelligence, law enforcement, and light infantry capabilities. They are also important in the sense that a heavy emphasis on Army internal security operations can be limited as much as possible.

It has taken some time for the building of these internal security forces to get underway. The assumption of the Pentagon in early 2003 and the early postwar phase was that there would not be such an intense and deadly insurgency. Consequently, the initial plans to train the Iraqi security forces were broad, relying on large numbers of recruits with very basic training in policing and conventional military operations. Only in early 2004 did the Iraqi interim Governing Council and the CPA put in place a policy to begin building specialized internal security forces to fight the insurgency. Since then, the emphasis has clearly shifted to training the right type of Iraqi security forces with the capabilities to take over offensive operations from U.S. forces with only minimal support. The internal security forces, which are specifically and intensively trained in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, are the key to the transfer of security to Iraqi forces.

Most Iraqi national guardsmen have had only cursory training, and the majority of army battalions have largely been prepared for conventional military defense against external threats. Pressing the ING into counterinsurgency duties is a misuse of their training, moreover the army so long a tool for internal repression under Saddam Hussein, should not be relied upon to play a prominent internal security role in a democratic Iraq.

Problems with both the IPS and ING can be traced back to the fact that initially, throughout 2003 and early 2004, much of the training and vetting of recruits for these services was decentralized. Local U.S. and coalition military commanders were given the responsibility to raise these units, leading to a lack of standardization in their training and in uneven vetting of these recruits across the country. The pressure on the US and coalition military to get Iraqi boots on the ground led to many local police simply being "reconstituted". Former police officers were re-employed without having to go through the required police academy training. National guardsmen went through minimal levels

of basic training and then were expected to be the bulk of Iraqi forces facing the insurgents.

To a certain extent, these training and vetting problems have been rectified. The raising and equipping of IPS and ING have been centralized, first under Major General Eaton from spring 2004 until June 2004 and since then under his successor, Lt. Gen. David Petraus. Under General Petraus, ING training involves 3 weeks of basic training and 3-4 weeks of collective training. However, ING capabilities are still limited to basic tasks such as fixed-point security, route-convoy security and joint patrolling with coalition troops. The ING performed these tasks admirably during the January 30 elections, when they were charged with creating cordon and perimeter security around polling centers; yet they still require heavy US logistical and combat support.

Local Iraqi police forces currently complete 8 weeks of training (or a 3-week refresher course for former officers) in police academies around Iraq and in Jordan. Still, their capabilities are limited to local policing duties and ensuring basic law and order. Given their skill sets, they are unable to combat the insurgency effectively as a frontline force. It should be noted that even the best-trained Western police forces would have a great deal of difficulty dealing with such intense and continuous attacks with RPGs, small-arms fire, and suicide bombings on their officers and police stations.

In contrast to the ING and the IPS, the Iraqi Army has had a centralized recruiting and vetting structure from its inception. As a result, the Army has attracted a higher quality of recruits who must undergo thorough and standardized vetting, and the training itself has been of a higher standard. The basic 8-week army boot camp is supplemented by additional training for recruits moving into special forces, such as the IIF.

As has been noted the bulk of Iraqi Army capabilities are attuned to conventional military operations, especially defending Iraq from external aggression. Given the past history of the Iraqi Army, including its use as a tool of repression against the Iraqi people, and the propensity for the military to dominate Iraqi politics, the US must very careful not to overemphasize the use of the Iraqi army in internal security operations. Necessity, however, has required the building up of the IIF (9 battalions by the end of January 2005) as the Army's key COIN wing. This force has proven to be extremely capable in operations in Samarra and Fallujah in late 2004.

The IAF also has at its disposal two trained special forces battalions. The 36th Commando Battalion, is a special ING battalion put together in late 2003, to serve as an infantry-type strike force. The 36th BN was created with fighters drawn from many of the different Iraqi militias. This was somewhat controversial in that it went against the principle of individual recruitment to ISF by bringing together units of militiamen from 5 main political parties⁶ More recently in mid 2004 the Iraqi Counterterrorism Battalion was formed by selecting exceptional soldiers drawn from both the ING and Army units.

⁶ Iraqi National Accord (INA), Iraqi National Congress (INC), the Badr Corp – the armed wing of the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the Kurdish Democratic party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Recruits from these different Iraqi forces are being trained at military bases and police academies across Iraq by coalition personnel and Iraqi officers who have undergone "train the trainer" courses. In addition, some military officers are receiving leadership instruction in military colleges in America, Britain, Italy and Australia. Police recruits are also being given intensive COIN training in neighboring states, including Jordan.

Any discussion of "accelerating" training of Iraqi security forces is misinformed and dangerous. It misses the point. The coalition cannot and should not accelerate training - that would mean cutting training cycles say from 8 weeks to 2 weeks which would result in putting less than capable Iraqi forces out on the front line. This was essentially the mistake made initially with the IPS for the sake of pointing to increased numbers of Iraqi forces on the ground. To avoid the rush to failure it is imperative the OSC;

- Maintain the length of training time and the standards. Avoid the temptation of cutting training cycles to get Iraqi forces out there quicker as this only leads to disaster and;
- More importantly US and coalition forces need to specifically focus resources to training the particular types of high-end ISF that can best deal with the insurgent threat and ultimately take the pressure of coalition troops

THE MNF-I RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

How exactly will the requirement for 'unity of command' of the Multi National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) (under US command) square with the newly elected Iraqi government's exercise of sovereignty? Just how much say will the Iraqis have over the operations of the MNF-I forces on Iraq's sovereign soil? What level of command and control will the new Iraqi government have over the mushrooming Iraqi security forces as compared to the limited controls exercised by the IIG?

During the interim period Prime Minister Allawi clearly placed security as the number one priority. As former chair of the Iraqi Governing Council Security Committee, Allawi worked closely with the CPA in developing policies for building the capacity and determining the direction of the newly formed Iraqi security institutions. These included the Ministerial Council of National Security (MCNS), the reconstituted MoI and its national police and internal security forces, and the 'start from scratch' IAF and MoD.

There is a degree of confusion over the true nature of the security structures in place in Iraq. The IIG was (as is the newly elected ITG) a fully sovereign government, albeit engaged in a complex security partnership and framework with coalition forces—one that is designed to enable Iraqi power, authority and responsibility for security and the capacity and capability of its own security institutions and forces to expand over time.

The line between external and internal Iraqi security is blurred. The Iraqi Interim PM had stated publicly on several occasions that internal security threats in Iraq often stem from activities of neighboring countries—either by direct interference by their intelligence operatives, by turning a blind eye to foreign Islamic extremists crossing their borders into Iraq, or by inadequate monitoring of their borders. Coalition forces, and the IAF as a partner in the MNF–I, provide the much needed support for internal security through internal patrolling and border enforcement. The IPS and particularly the specially trained police commando units are expected to improve and develop overall ISF ability to deal with these complex threats, so that they will eventually take the lead in COIN and CT operations.

The security relationship between the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG), its security forces and the MNF–I were largely defined by UNSCR 1546. The resolution noted that the MNF–I in Iraq operated and was present at the request of the IIG and reaffirmed the authorization for the MNF–I and its unity of command, which is essential to employ those military forces effectively. In calling for the resolution, Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi asked the international community to reaffirm the mandate of the MNF–I to continue to provide both internal and external defense until the developing Iraqi security forces are capable of taking over responsibility for Iraq's security. The handover of security responsibilities to Iraqi security forces is a long way from completion and it is likely that the newly elected ITG will continue with the approach of the IIG rather than call for a formal SOFA. This may change however with the election of the permanent government in December.

While UNSCR 1546 broadly outlines Iraqi security relationships, the specifics of the partnership come down to how the IAF fit into the command and control of the MNF–I, and to the ITG's involvement in military decision-making. In theory and in the future stabilized state of Iraq, even if not in ITG practice during 2005, command authority for the IAF issues from the PM, to the Defense Minister, to the Chief of Defense Staff, to the operating commander. At the moment, the IAF's relationship to the MNF–I makes the picture slightly different. Since the transition to sovereignty, IAF personnel have been assigned to coalition forces as Iraq's contribution to the MNF–I, making Iraq a fully fledged member of the coalition.

The MNF–I main task of supporting Iraqi security forces in internal security operations is gradually shifting to the training of the newly formed and reconstituted Iraqi units. Although the IAF is an active partner of the coalition and contributes forces to the MNF–I, the security framework underpinning the MNF–I presence and activities complicated the exercise of the IIG's sovereign power and responsibilities. The democratic credibility of the ITG has to an extent lessened these concerns.

Before the handover to sovereignty, Iraqi ministers raised the issue of Iraqi involvement in military decision-making, and the coalition looked for a way to give Iraqis a voice in the use of coalition forces, including the IAF. The Fallujah and Sadr crises in April 2004, and the creation of the extremely effective Iraqi Ministerial Council of National Security (MCNS), brought to the surface the difficult questions of control of domestic IAF

operations and Iraqi input to decisions concerning sensitive uses of force especially involving the IAF. To be able to operate effectively after 28 June, militarily and politically, coalition officials knew they had to tackle these tough but legitimate issues. They also knew that if they tried to limit Iraqi decision making on such matters, efforts to form a genuine security partnership could stall and possibly fail. They were adamant that the creation of a proper coordination link would placate Iraqi concerns, while ensuring military operational freedom and unity of command. The pivotal question in coalition planning was about how to give the Iraqis the opportunity to participate in decisions about the use of force in their own country, without affecting the unity of command and operational freedom of the MNF-I.

The CPA opted for an institutional approach. The idea that emerged was to create a force-coordinating mechanism between the MNF-I commander and key IIG officials as part of post 28 June arrangement. The chosen policy was to create a contact group consisting of essential IIG and MNF-I leadership, to be convoked by the MNF-I commander, (currently General Casey). The relationship was to be neither the MNF-I commander answering to the Iraqis, nor the commander and the Iraqis dealing with one another at arm's length.

The functions of the group were clearly expressed as responsibilities of the respective partners, in order to demonstrate by word and deed that the Iraqi political leadership are truly partners in the MNF-I. The final formula was as follows:

- The Iraqi officials are responsible for funding, staffing, training and equipping military forces. Therefore, the MNF-I commander should have the opportunity to state force requirements.
- The commander is responsible for planning and carrying out military operations. The Iraqi officials will be given timely and full information about the operations and the chance to consult about and influence them, especially sensitive ones such as IAF units being used in urban areas.
- The Iraqis will be responsible for operating the police, and the MNF-I commander for operating military forces. Therefore, both should be obliged to ensure tight coordination.

In practice, political considerations and the genuine control sought by the IIG made it imperative that in this interim period General Casey sought Iraqi consent before using the IAF in sensitive operations. The newly elected IIG and MNF-I officials continue to tackle difficult security operations, both partners have a political obligation to continue to work towards consensus and to resolve problems within the contact group. Left unsolved, such problems would hinder security operations in the face of Iraq's enemies.

Looking to the long term, the security concept for future Iraqi command structures developed with Iraqis in the interim period remains sound for 2005 and beyond:

- When the police cannot handle a threat, the Minister Interior and the PM ask the Minister of Defense to assign the required capabilities, which then operate under MoI command and control.

- When the threat is so severe and widespread that the MoI cannot provide effective command and control of the forces needed to defeat the threat, the PM asks the MoD to direct the use of military forces.

The assumption is that in the coming years, once Ministry of Interior/police forces grow in strength and capability and Iraq's security situation stabilizes, the first step would be rare and the second step even more unlikely. The MCNS has adopted this general formula. Importantly, however, the formula does not apply under the current conditions of violent insurgency and terrorism faced by the current ITG. It may well be adopted by in the next 12 months, depending on the degree of stability in Iraq and a defeat or successful containment of the insurgency but it is more likely that the future permanent Iraqi government will adopt these procedures sometime during its term of office.. Currently, the only entity with adequate operational control is the MNF-I. Neither the MoI nor the MoD can direct the use of the IAF domestically, a point admitted in the Transitional Administrative Law⁷ which is effective at least until the referendum and ratification of the new Iraqi constitution in late 2005.

The continued authenticity of Iraqi partnership (and power) in the MNF-I is demonstrated by the presence of senior Iraqi military officers throughout the MNF-I command structure. The current involvement of Iraqi officers at the various levels of operational and tactical command and control makes them real partners and owners in the accomplishment of security objectives and aids a smooth transfer of full security responsibility to the permanent Iraqi government post December 2005.

⁷ S 59B